

Case Number:	CM15-0119796		
Date Assigned:	06/30/2015	Date of Injury:	06/09/2009
Decision Date:	07/29/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/08/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/22/2015

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: Texas, Florida, California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The injured worker is a 56-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 6/9/2009. The mechanism of injury is documented from moving forklift batteries. The injured worker was diagnosed as having thoracic and lumbar spondylosis, post lumbar laminectomy, lumbar/thoracic radiculopathy and urinary incontinence. There is no record of a recent diagnostic study. Treatment to date has included hernia repair, spinal surgery, epidural injections, total knee revision, spinal cord stimulator, therapy and medication management. In a progress note dated 6/1/2015, the injured worker complains of knee pain and low back pain. The pain was rated 7/10 without medications and 3-4/10 with medications. Physical examination showed abnormal gait. The treating physician is requesting Oxymorphone ER 5 mg #60.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

Oxymorphone ER 5mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 81, 86.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

Decision rationale: This claimant was injured in 2009 from moving batteries. The diagnoses were thoracic and lumbar spondylosis, post lumbar laminectomy, lumbar/thoracic radiculopathy and urinary incontinence. Treatment to date has included hernia repair, spinal surgery, epidural injections, total knee revision, spinal cord stimulator, therapy and medication management. As of June, there is still knee and low back pain. Physical examination showed abnormal gait. The current California web-based MTUS collection was reviewed in addressing this request. They note in the Chronic Pain section: When to Discontinue Opioids: Weaning should occur under direct ongoing medical supervision as a slow taper except for the below mentioned possible indications for immediate discontinuation. They should be discontinued: (a) If there is no overall improvement in function, unless there are extenuating circumstances. When to Continue Opioids (a) If the patient has returned to work (b) If the patient has improved functioning and pain. In the clinical records provided, it is not clearly evident these key criteria have been met in this case. Moreover, in regards to the long term use of opiates, the MTUS also poses several analytical necessity questions such as: has the diagnosis changed, what other medications is the patient taking, are they effective, producing side effects, what treatments have been attempted since the use of opiates, and what is the documentation of pain and functional improvement and compare to baseline. These are important issues, and they have not been addressed in this case. As shared earlier, there especially is no documentation of functional improvement with the regimen. The request for the opiate usage is not medically necessary per MTUS guideline review.